



JB Pritzker, Governor

James L. Bennett, ICED Co-Chair and Director, Department of Human Rights (IDHR)

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STATE HONORS LEADERS DURING NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) Celebrates America's Recovery Powered by Inclusion

SPRINGFIELD – In honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the State of Illinois' Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) today hosted a hybrid virtual and in-person event to highlight and celebrate the achievements and positive impacts of state employees with disabilities, and the agencies they support.

This year's national theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month is "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion."

"We're grateful for the employees, agencies and elected leaders who contribute greatly to make working for the State inclusive and enriching," **said IDHR Director, Jim Bennett**. "I'm inspired by this year's awardees and take this opportunity to say 'thank you' for making Illinois a fair and equal state for all."

"Increasing meaningful work opportunities for people with disabilities is a priority at IDHS, in October and every month of the year," **said IDHS Secretary, Grace B. Hou**. "This event is an important moment to reflect on the many ways all of us can support inclusion and empowerment -- for everyone, regardless of ability -- through employment, education, and independent living opportunities."

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is every October. It traces its history back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week."

ICED honored the following individuals and organizations for their outstanding commitment to support State of Illinois employees with disabilities:

Outstanding Employee of the Year

Brandon Singer, Coordinator, Disabled Workers Program, CMS

Outstanding State Agency of the Year

Illinois State Treasurer's Office, Treasurer Michael W. Frerichs

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Outstanding Advocate of the Year
**Department of Rehabilitation Services, Workforce Development Unit, Illinois Department of
Human Services**

Legislator of the Year
State Senator Laura Fine, 9th District

Also participating in today's celebration as master of ceremonies was Stacey Skrysak from Newschannel 20 and Barry C. Taylor from Equip for Equality as keynote speaker, with entertainment provided by Robert Sampson (also known as "Lefty Preacher").

About the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED)

The Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities (ICED) was created by statute in 1974 to support State of Illinois employees with disabilities. The Committee holds regular meetings to plan activities that promote and expand access, opportunity, and independence within State employment. The Committee is a forum for the dissemination of information on disability matters and as a place where issues of general concern for State of Illinois employees with disabilities can be raised. Learn more at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/iced/Pages/default.aspx>.

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